towns in 5 States. A sum of Rs. 369.15 crore has been released to the State Governments so far to assist them in implementation. Capacity to treat 150 million litres per day of sewage has been created so far.

It has been possible to minimise the organic pollution reaching the river Ganga in places where the schemes have been completed and made functional. There has however been an incidental reduction in the level of microbial pollution reaching the river.

Fire in the Forests of Uttaranchal

†1700. SHRI MANOHAR KANT DHYANI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Planning Commission had sanctioned rupees 10 crores last year, after heavy losses in the forests of Uttaranchal due to fire;

(b) if so, whether the Ministry has made available the said amount to Uttar Pradesh after receiving it; and

(c) if so, the details of funds received by Garhwal and Kumaon Mandal, if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure has sanctioned additional central assistance of Rs. 10 crores to Government of Uttar Pradesh during 1999-2000 for prevention and control of forest fires. As intimated by the State Government of Uttar Pradesh Rs. 6.6332 crore of the total outlay has been earmarked for the hill areas and Rs. 3.3668 crore for the plain areas of the State.

Seizure of Skins of wild animals

1701. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the estimated value of tiger, leopard and jungle cat skins seized during the last one year and what are the sanctuaries/ areas in the country identified where poaching of wildlife is most rampant;

(b) what, according to the appraisal, if any, made by Government, are the

†Original Notice of the question was received in Hindi.

reasons for failure of the measures taken so far to check poaching of wildlife in the country;

(c) whether Government have considered the desirability of setting up a specialised investigating agency to deal with the wildlife-related crimes; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) The estimated value of tiger, leopard and jungle cat skins seized during the last one year is approximately Rs. 17 lakhs. Cases of poaching have been detected both inside and outside the protected areas. However, instances of poaching are higher outside the protected areas due to inadequate enforcement infrastructure.

(b) Poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its product, because of high pecuniary gains, has organised itself in a powerful mafia.The enforcement machinery does not have adquate infrastructure to combat such organised mafias.

(c) and (d) A proposal is under consideration in this Ministry for setting up of a special mechanism for Wildlife Trade Prevention and Control to deal with poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and its products.

Unsatisfactory Waste Disposal Systems

1702. SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that most of the waste disposal systems in use in different cities and towns of the country are not satisfactory and are responsible for environmental pollution;

(b) whether the Ministry would take necessary steps to enforce the use of waste disposal system, which would be eco-friendly and less hazardous; and

(c) if so, when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT